



"Alas! a at its Best!"

## CITY OF PALMER

231 West Evergreen Avenue  
Palmer, Alaska 99645  
Phone (907) 745-3271 • Fax (907) 745-0930  
[www.cityofpalmer.org](http://www.cityofpalmer.org)

December 28, 2005

State of Alaska  
Department of Transportation and Public Facilities  
STIP Comments  
Division of Program Development  
3132 Channel Drive, Suite 200  
Juneau, AK 99801-7898

This letter contains the City of Palmer's comments on the Department of Transportation and Public Facility's (DOT & PF) Draft 2006-2008 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

*Palmer urges DOT & PF to structure the 2006-2008 STIP and future STIPs to increase funding to build needed transportation projects in the Palmer and Matanuska-Susitna Borough area.*

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough is the fastest growing area in Alaska and will soon pass Fairbanks as the State's second largest municipality. The Borough estimates that by 2025 the Borough population will more than double, to approximately 170,000 residents. Population growth brings more traffic and congestion to local roads. In the Palmer area, population and traffic are increasing significantly. According to the DOT & PF 2004 *Annual Traffic Volume Report*, since 1999 traffic on the Glenn Highway south of Palmer and on the Palmer-Wasilla Highway west of Palmer has increased 17%, with average annual daily traffic counts up to 16,000. These two-lane roads do not function properly at these traffic levels. While DOT & PF has built several highway improvement projects in this area in recent years, the STIP must allocate increased funding for road improvements in the central Matanuska-Susitna Borough area to plan, design and construct projects to meet existing and future traffic demands.

Alaska has an opportunity now with higher federal transportation funding levels to make major improvements to transportation systems in areas of the state where projects will have the greatest benefit. Palmer asks that the STIP be consistent with that goal by scheduling the timely construction of projects in the Palmer and central Matanuska-Susitna Borough area to relieve traffic congestion on existing roads.

The following comments address Palmer-area projects listed in the draft STIP:

**Old Glenn Highway Rehabilitation** – Palmer urges DOT & PF to maintain the STIP schedule for construction of this project in FFY 06 and FFY 07.

**Chugach Street Rehabilitation** – The STIP shows construction of this project for FFY 09. Palmer understands this project will be bid and constructed in 2006. DOT & PF should correct this error in the project schedule.

**Bogard Road Extension East** – DOT & PF and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough entered into a memorandum of agreement for this project. Palmer urges the completion of this project before the STIP schedule of FFY 09. This project is critically important to improve east-west traffic capacity and to relieve congestion on Evergreen Avenue and the Palmer-Wasilla Highway.

**Trunk Road Reconstruction** – This project should be advanced in the schedule. Trunk Road is a major north-south collector road. Its present condition does not meet existing traffic demands.

**Glenn Highway MP 92 to 97** – Palmer supports improvements to the Glenn Highway to improve the safety and efficiency of this primary Alaska highway.

The following comments address Palmer-area projects not listed in the draft STIP:

**Glenn Highway MP 34 to 41** – This project will reconstruct the Glenn Highway from a two-lane to a four-lane highway. The draft STIP does not identify this project for funding in the 2006-2008 period, but preliminary design work has started. The STIP must include this project.

**Palmer Urban Revitalization** – This project will construct trails, parking and landscaping in the Alaska Railroad right-of-way in Palmer. This project will be constructed in FFY 06, but the draft STIP does not include any funding for this project. The STIP must include this project.

**West Dogwood Avenue** – This project will extend West Dogwood Avenue west from the new intersection on the Glenn Highway to Felton Street. The project will provide a second means of access to and from downtown Palmer and will provide a possible couplet traffic pattern to relieve congestion in downtown Palmer.

**Hemmer Road** – This new north-south collector road is identified in the City of Palmer and Borough transportation plans. It will connect the extended Bogard Road to the Palmer-Wasilla Highway and will continue south from the Palmer-Wasilla Highway to the Glenn Highway. This road will relieve congestion on the Glenn Highway in downtown Palmer at the intersection of the Glenn Highway and the Palmer-Wasilla Highway.

The new STIP format provides additional information on each project, but this format makes it more difficult to compare changes in project schedules to the previous STIP. Palmer suggests that DOT & PF continue to present the STIP in the table format as in previous STIPs.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions, please contact me at 761-1304.

Sincerely,



Thomas Healy  
City Manager